

CURIOUS LIQUORS

Interesting Facts About Drinks Used in America.

FOREIGN TASTES IMPORTED

Immigrants Bring With Them the Desire for the Liquors of Their Fatherlands and Their Tastes Are Catered To.

The flood of immigration, which in an irresistible stream has poured into the United States from every corner of the wide world for the past half century, has brought with it in the way of pleasure and jettison a host of strange liquors, with weird names and subtle effects. The prosaic figures of the customs reports of the Treasury Department tell the story of the increasing magnitude of this traffic, which has sprung up in the wake of the exodus of races to solve and satisfy the great American thirst problem.

The simple life for the barkeeper as now only a memory. No longer, as in the good old days of unperverted taste, can he establish a jogg factory with a barrel of whiskey, a happy smile and a quick trigger finger for operating capital; at least he cannot do it and cut his coupons with any degree of certainty and regularity. A complex civilization is no longer content with "mountain dew" straight, but its heterogeneous thirst demands sake, mastic, tirnovka, arrack, aquavit, bouza, quess, chica, murra, teff, yaoust. In addition to an almost limitless list of new wines and beers. The time has arrived when the competent barkeeper must not only be an expert analytical chemist, but also an accomplished anthropologist.

Mastic, or masticia, is a gift to the American republic from the isles of Greece. It is a drink with a proud lineage that runs back to the times of Pericles, Aspasia, Sophocles and Anaxagoras. It is even the tradition that it is the tittle that gave Xantippe a tongue so bitter that Socrates welcomed the cup of deadly hemlock as the only solution of the trial marriage problem. Painstaking investigation of the qualities of modern drastic throws a flood of light upon the vexed problem of the battle of Marathon, in which a handful of Greeks swept the vast army of invading Persians into the sea and saved Europe for Occidental civilization. A homeopathic dose of mastic has enough concentrated courage in it to make a rabbit spit in a bull dog's face. Historians are, therefore, leaning to the theory that the famous charge of the Athenians, which struck the Persians like a bolt of ravaging fury, had its inspiration in soul-burning draughts of the historical progenitor of mastic. According to modern police records, one American full of mastic is a storm center of desolation; an army loaded with juice would be a cyclone of disaster.

Mastic has come to the United States in the train of the large immigration from Greece and the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean. It can be had at nearly all the bars in the large cities of the East and Middle West. It is one of the most fiery of the brandies and is made from the must of

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grapes or currants after the juice has been expressed for wine. Care is taken to crush the seeds in this must, and, as a consequence, the mastic has a peculiar astringent taste that needs considerable practice to enjoy.

With the invasion of the Japanese particularly in the West, has come the introduction of sake, a drink around which clusters many religious myths as to its origin. It is thick and syrupy and is made from rice. It has so high a percentage of alcohol that it is classified under the head of spirits by the customs house officials. There are a number of varieties of sake, and some of them have succeeded in capturing the jaded taste of the bibulously inclined on the Pacific Coast.

Pulque, tequila, mescal and other thickly studded with century plant from the maguey plant in Mexico, have a certain vogue in the Southwest, but the national drinks of Mexico have not become popular this side of the Rio Grande, and are not to be had east of the Santa Fe or El Paso. There are thousands of acres in Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California that are at present yielding no return that could be utilized for maguey plants, and doubtless the Southwest would be as rich in maguey as is the Southwestern prairie. The valley sister republic of Mexico if the American palate could be trained to like tequila or mescal.

Many immigrants from the Danube valley, Bulgarians, Roumanians, Servians, Slavs, Bosnians, Russian Jews,

&c., have invaded the Northwest, and as a result the customs authorities have made the acquaintance of "tirnovka of the prune and plum. Not only of the Danube is probably the original home of the prune and plum. Not only do they grow wild, but what is more, nowhere in Europe do they reach such perfection, and despite the competition of France and California, Bosnia and Serbia still furnish the greater part of the world's prune supply. Prunes and plums are the two chief sources of wealth of these Balkan states, for after the people have sold all the prunes they can for export they feed the rest to the pigs or distill them into prune brandy.

Cherries and plums, were long ago utilized for liquor by the people of Europe. Two famous liquors that are now extensively consumed here were invented in widely separated countries. Maraschino was first made in commercial quantities at the little town of Zara, in Dalmatia, the makers having obtained the secret from the neighboring Slavs of Bosnia. It was originally distilled from the fine, large Marasca cherry, and after the distillation the seeds of the cherries were cracked and the liquor flavored from the pits. The art of making brandies came from Germany, who doubtless also learned the art of making light brandies of plums and cherries from their neighboring Slavs in Poland and Bohemia and invented the liquor known as "kirchenwasser ("cherry water"), of which great quantities are consumed in the

United States.

Sloe gin is a drink that has rapidly become popular in this country of late years, and is closely akin to the tirnovka of the eastern Slav. Quantities of sloes—the wild prune that grows all over Europe—are allowed to soak for a long period in first class gin. At the end of this the liquor is drawn off and the slow pomace is placed in a press and the juice is extracted and added to the gin. The sloe is believed to have certain medicinal properties. Sloe gin is an invention of recent years, and is made exclusively in England.

(Concluded on page 6)

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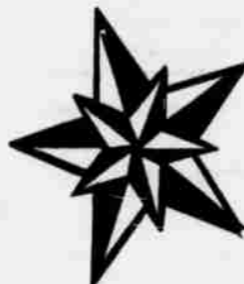
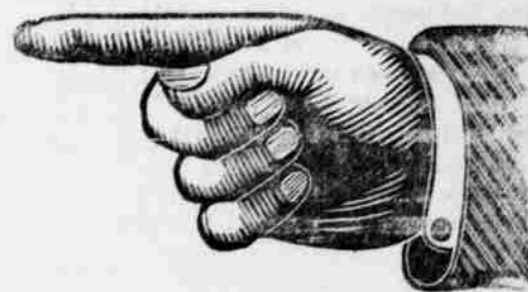


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